Amendments to the Claims

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, or a full complement thereof.

Claims 2-3 (canceled)

Claim 4 (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid molecule which encodes a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, or a full complement thereof.

Claim 5 (canceled)

Claim 6 (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence which has at least 90% identity with the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, or a full complement thereof, [[and]] wherein said nucleic acid molecule encodes a polypeptide which is capable of functioning as an extracellular nuclease.

Claims 7-9 (canceled)

Claim 10 (currently amended) A vector comprising the nucleic acid molecule of any one of claims 1, 4, 6, 39, 40 or 41~~claim 1~~.

Claim 11 (Original) The vector of claim 10, which is an expression vector.

Claim 12 (Original) A host cell transfected with the expression vector of claim 11.

Claim 13 (previously presented) The host cell of claim 12, wherein said host cell is a microorganism.

Claim 14 (currently amended) The host cell of claim 13, wherein said host cell belongs to the genus *Corynebacterium* or *Brevibacterium.*

Claim 15 (currently amended) The host cell of claim 12 [[or 42]], wherein the expression of said nucleic acid molecule results in the modulation in production of a fine chemical from said host cell.

Claim 16 (currently amended) The host cell of claim 15 [[or 42]], wherein said fine chemical is selected from the group consisting of: organic acids, proteinogenic and nonproteinogenic amino acids, purine and pyrimidine bases, nucleosides, nucleotides, lipids, saturated and unsaturated fatty acids, diols, carbohydrates, aromatic compounds, vitamins, cofactors, polyketides, and enzymes.

Claims 17-38 (canceled)

Claim 39 (previously presented) An isolated nucleic acid molecule consisting of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, or a full complement thereof.

Claim 40 (previously presented) An isolated nucleic acid molecule which encodes a polypeptide consisting of the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:2, or a full complement thereof.

Claim 41 (previously presented) An isolated nucleic acid molecule consisting of a nucleotide sequence which is at least 90% identical to the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, or a full complement thereof, wherein said nucleotide sequence encodes a polypeptide which is capable of functioning as an extracellular nuclease.

Claim 42 (currently amended) The host cell of claim 13, wherein said host cell is a bacterial cell.

Claim 43 (new) The host cell of claim 42, wherein the expression of said nucleic acid molecule results in the modulation in production of a fine chemical from said host cell.

Claim 44 (new) The host cell of claim 43, wherein said fine chemical is selected from the group consisting of: organic acids, proteinogenic and nonproteinogenic amino acids, purine and pyrimidine bases, nucleosides, nucleotides, lipids, saturated and unsaturated fatty acids, diols, carbohydrates, aromatic compounds, vitamins, cofactors, polyketides, and enzymes.